2018

Consolidating School Social Action and Food Services

Measures were taken to consolidate and improve the quality of food services, such as:

- Providing meals during Christmas and Easter breaks at all state schools;
- Availability of lactose-free and vegetable-based milk as an alternative to milk (5% of stock) in pre-school education and 1st cycle of basic education;
- Extension of free fruit programme to pre-school education (previously only applied to the 1st cycle of basic education);
- Implementation of the Integrated Quality and Quantity Control of School Meals Plan (with special focus on the 750 contracted canteens, but with measures that also include directly managed canteens), through the creation of regional inspection teams, close monitoring of school boards and school reports on compliance with regulatory and contractual duties, if applicable (165,000 test meals).

As part of improved school social action, measures regarding meals and food support are supported by the increased funds in the State Budget for 2018 (€260 M), an increase of €8.5 M in relation to 2017, which also allowed for:

- the creation of a 3rd level of school social action;
- the granting of study visits for socio-economically disadvantaged pupils by advancing the funds needed for schools to ensure the effectiveness of this support.

Stability and Status of Education Professionals

Considering the stability and status of the teaching career as a key aspect of quality education and social recognition of schools themselves, in 2018 Portugal consolidated policies that improved working conditions for teaching and non-teaching staff in state schools.

These included:

- Extraordinary recruitment of permanent teaching staff, which included over 3,500 teachers in 2017 and an identical number in 2018;
- Special legislation (limits set by law) reducing the number of years required to sign a contract of indefinite duration - from 2018 onwards, 3 successive contracts/2 renewals. In 2016, 5 successive contracts/4 renewals were required;
- Regularization of music and dance teachers’ professional situation: an unprecedented recruitment and selection scheme based on special legislation setting limits and guaranteeing career stability;
• Portuguese Sign Language Recruitment Group: inclusion of specialised staff who taught a full year, full time, during the 2018/2019 academic year, in this new Recruitment Group, providing professional stability and correcting an unjustified employment inequality;
• Unfreezing of the teaching career - ending the career freeze between 2011 and 2017, allowing progression of approximately 46,000 teachers during 2018;
• Continuous training: during the 2018/2019 academic year, 35,000 teachers and educational agents are expected to participate in continuous training courses (estimated cost of 15 M €/HCOP);
• Extraordinary Regularization of Precarious Work in Public Administration Programme (PREVPAP): procedures for the recruitment of thousands of non-teaching staff who had temporary contracts;
• Unfreezing of non-teaching careers - the general rules for unfreezing of public administration careers have been applied to all operational staff, technical staff, specialized staff and other professionals in the education system;
• Non-Teaching Staff Training Plan: training sessions will be organised for this staff during the first term of the 2018/2019 academic year, in schools in the interior of the country;
• Operational staff: recruitment of 2,000 additional operational staff during 2017 and 2018, due to the alteration of the Ordinance (14th September 2017) that defines the ratios of these personnel.

School Sports

The 2017/2021 School Sport Program redefined the guidelines for these projects, guaranteeing the improvement of students' physical literacy, in line with the World Health Organization’s recommendations. After the 2017/2018 academic year, there was an annual increase of 400 teaching periods attributed to school sports, reaching 22 200 teaching periods attributed to this purpose (+ €30 M/school year).

The School Sports Program is the largest national multi-year educational project.

Free textbooks for all pupils (update)

For the 2019/2020 academic year, free school textbooks are expected to be extended to all cycles of basic and secondary education without jeopardising schools' freedom to adopt textbooks in accordance with the provisions of Law no. 47/2006, 28th August, with the wording of Law no. 72/2017, 16th August, which defines the evaluation, certification and adoption system for school textbooks in basic and secondary education.

Curricular flexibility and autonomy (update)

Following analysis and public discussion in 2016 and 2017, including a teacher survey on the curriculum, conferences and meetings involving experts, teachers and students, as well as participation in the OECD’s Education 2030 project and the drafting, public consultation and publication of the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education, the pilot project was undertaken during the 2017/18 academic year in 302 public and private schools in the different regions to experiment with a new, more up-to-date and inclusive curriculum framework that ensured greater autonomy and flexibility in curriculum management.

This project was monitored by various education administration bodies, Portuguese experts and a team of specialists from the OECD and was the basis for the publication of Decree-Law no. 55/2018 [1], on 6th July, 2018, which establishes the basic and upper-secondary education curriculum, as well as the guiding principles of its creation, implementation and assessment of the learning.
At the same time, a curriculum revision and redesign was undertaken with education experts and teachers' associations, identifying Essential Learning to be carried out in each subject and year of schooling within a context of autonomy and flexibility. These documents were tested in the pilot project schools, with teachers giving very positive feedback.

Schools, in dialogue with students, families and community, are now able:

i) To have greater flexibility in curriculum management to encourage interdisciplinary work, in order to extend, consolidate and enrich Essential Learning;

ii) To implement the Citizenship and Development component in the different educational and training provision to promote active citizenship, democratic participation within intercultural contexts of sharing and collaboration, as well as the exchange of ideas on current issues;

iii) To encourage students to develop skills regarding research, evaluation, reflection, critical and autonomous mobilisation of information to solve problems and boost their self-esteem and well-being;

iv) To adopt different ways of organising school via the creation of educational teams that capitalise on teaching work and focus it on students;

v) To invest in project work and in the development of oral, written, visual and multimodal communication and expression, valuing the role of students as authors, providing them with meaningful learning situations;

vi) To consolidate learning assessment by focussing on the diversity of tools that provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of work done and support at the first sign of student difficulty in learning;

vii) To provide students in upper-secondary education the chance of adopting their own training pathway through the exchange and substitution of subjects regarding the specific and scientific components of each course.

Inclusive education (update)

Based on the work undertaken by the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Inclusive Education in 2016 and 2017, and incorporating the results of the subsequent public and institutional consultation processes, Decree-Law 54/2018 [2] was published, which establishes the principles and norms that guarantee educational inclusion via greater participation in the learning processes and the educational community.

This legislation introduces an important change in this area, identifying measures that support learning and inclusion, specific curriculum areas, as well as specific resources to be mobilized to meet the educational needs of each and every child and young person throughout their schooling in the different areas of educational and training provision.

An approach based on clinical classifications is thus rejected, helping to create conditions in which measures in the different models - universal, selective and additional - can be taken by each school, within the scope of its autonomy, that are geared towards the inclusion of each of its students.

A technical guide has been published and meetings with all school boards are ongoing, as well as training for teachers and other staff, to ensure proper implementation of these new guidelines from the 2018/2019 academic year onwards.
Free textbooks for all pupils from the 1st to the 6th grade

Extending the programme already started in the previous year in the first cycle, the proposal to provide free textbooks for all students in the 1st and 2nd cycles of basic education in 2018/19 (a total of around 500,000 students) was approved. This measure adheres to the constitutional principle of free education, as well as quality of learning and equal opportunities, ensuring all students benefit from a key aspect of school success.

In addition to this, an electronic platform to facilitate this process of free textbooks was created, providing more efficient coordination between schools, families and points of sale.

Pedagogic innovation pilot-project

Since November 2017, as part of the monitoring of the Pedagogic Innovation Pilot-Project (PIPP) follow-up visits were made by the DGE to each school cluster. Additionally, the Network Meetings continued to involve all school clusters of the pilot project.

In November 2017, January and March 2018, three meetings of the PPIP School Network were held to share experiences and continue reflection on the promotion of pedagogical innovation in schools, identifying critical aspects of success related to the measures that have been implemented and ways of dealing with them, to promote sharing, reflection and discussion in order to draw conclusions from the process experienced and to define future steps.

Another important aspect is the extension of this project to another school, the Silves Sul School Cluster, which took part in this pilot project on 29th December, 2017, by order of the Secretary of State and which has already presented the first version of the project, which is currently under revision, and has already begun implementing some of the proposed measures.

Learning communities project (INCLUD-ED)

Since November 2017, as part of the monitoring of the Learning Communities Project, the training given in July 2017 was internally replicated through a process of the self-training of teachers, based on the training modules provided by the DGE.

To this end, the 1st term (September-December) was dedicated to preparation and, from January onwards, school clusters began to implement the project. The school clusters that chose to become Learning Communities developed the various stages of transformation (awareness, decision-making, vision, priorities and planning) and began to implement successful educational initiatives. The ones that chose to only implement successful educational initiatives (interactive groups, dialogical literary gathering, dialogical teacher training, dialogic model of conflict prevention, participation of the educational community and/or family members training) have already started them.

It is also worth mentioning that, in addition to the Facebook [3] account dedicated to the project, launched during the initial teacher education (ITE) training session in July 2017 for dissemination and sharing, another webpage was created in February 2018 on the DGE website [4] to provide information and documentation.

Additionally, in January 2018, (external) evaluation of the project began with the data collection before the start of project implementation.
INCoDe.2030

In Area 2, Education, the following flagship policies have been established:

- Development of digital educational resources: design, development and dissemination of digital educational resources for different levels of education, subjects, curricular and training components, promoting innovative educational environments. The development of digital resources and a web platform for 1st-cycle teachers and students in the areas of experimental sciences, mathematics and Portuguese are currently underway;

- Training of pre-school, primary and secondary education teachers: training programme for primary and secondary school teachers, with the participation of the School Associations Training Centres (CFAE) and higher education institutions;

- Extension and further development of the ICT curriculum;

- Design and implementation of the subject Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) from the 5th to the 9th year, which is currently being piloted as part of the pedagogical flexibility and autonomy project;

- Design of an ICT reference framework for 1st-cycle students.

National strategy for citizenship education

Following the implementation of the National Citizenship Education Strategy (ENEC), in conjunction with the development of the Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy Project (PAFC), there is a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) organised by the Directorate-General for Education (DGE), which aims to support the teachers of PAFC schools, in a consistent process of changing pedagogical practices.

In Module 6 of this course, whose theme is Citizenship and Development, the key ideas of the National Strategy for Citizenship Education (2017) are presented, as are the practical impact on school activity and the organisation of pedagogical and didactic activities, relating them with the day-to-day challenges in students' lives or with the community that the school is part of. Driven by this context, the school faces various questions whose response must translate the vision advocated in the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education.

This course runs from 22nd January to 30th April, 2018, with 3,460 students enrolled, of whom 1,059 are actively participating.

Curricular flexibility and autonomy

As part of the Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy Project (PAFC) created by Dispatch no. 5908/2017, 5th July, a supervision and monitoring process for implementation and development is being developed through a simple and non-bureaucratic model, whose main aims are:

- To promote autonomy based on trusting each school and its responsibility inherent to providing quality public education;

- To support schools in the implementation and development of the project, while respecting their autonomy;

- To promote reflection and shared practice;

- To promote networking between schools.

Between November 2017 and March 2018 there was one national meeting, 7 regional meetings, 34 network meetings and 170 visits to schools. In addition to this, schools are also monitored by distance support, via e-mail and Moodle. A database was also created to gather information from schools and training was provided via workshops, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and Webinars.
On 9th February 2018, the National Meeting on Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy was held for all public and private schools, as well as other bodies, to present an initial review of the PAFC and data resulting from the OECD’s mid-term evaluation, as well as multiple perspectives on this project, namely from national coordination authority, schools, PAFC consultants, external bodies and students. This meeting was attended by 750 people.

As a result of the provisions of point 16 of Dispatch no. 5908/2017, 5th July, an OECD team made up of international experts visited Portugal. Between 15th and 19th January 2018, this team visited participating schools with the aim of undertaking a mid-term evaluation of the project, in terms of its design, implementation and impact in the educational community. To this end, the team visited 9 PAFC schools, interviewing head teachers, teachers involved in the project, students, parents and school partners. Subsequently, this international team met with members of the PAFC’s national coordination team, the technical team and regional team coordinators.

There were also interviews held with PAFC consultants and bodies external to the project, such as those with the Private and Cooperative Education Establishments Association, the National Public School Cluster Heads Association, the Scientific and Pedagogical Council of Continuing Education, the National Education Council, the School Council, the Refugee Support Platform and the Portuguese Mathematical Society.

Curriculum working group (essential learning)

In August 2017, Essential Learning (EL) for the first years of schooling of every education cycle was published on the webpage of the Directorate-General for Education (DGE). In the 2017/2018 academic year, EL was implemented in the classes of schools that have been part of the Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy Project (PAFC).

During the pilot project monitoring process, a survey on Essential Learning was used to:

- assess teachers' perception regarding the identification in the EL content of what is essential for all students to learn in relation to what is established in other curricular documents in use;
- assess the teachers' perception regarding the coordination of EL with the development of the Student’s Profile;
- check the readability of the EL as a basic curriculum reference document (in terms of structure, organisation and layout);
- understanding whether the drafting of EL facilitates: (1) interdisciplinary planning; (2) pedagogical differentiation; (3) the use of active methodologies.

The data collected from 219 units underlined the essential aspects of learning in the educational process. For example:

- 83% of the respondents considered that the structure, organisation and layout of the EL document facilitate or greatly facilitate curricular planning;
- 77% considered that the drafting of EL facilitates or greatly facilitates coordination between different curriculum components;
- 84% considered that EL are objective or very objective in relation to knowledge development.

On 29th January 2018, the DGE held a meeting with all teachers associations involved defining the EL to review the work in progress.

Currently, the EL are being completed for all grades and levels of education of every subject that is part of curricula (from early childhood education to the 12th year of schooling).
Follow-up group of the pilot project offering Mandarin as a foreign language on secondary education curriculum

In the 2017/2018 academic year, the Ministry of Education continued with the pilot project for providing Mandarin as a foreign language in the same 12 schools of the public network that had already been involved with this initiative the previous year. The number of students rose to 361, which demonstrates the interest in this foreign language and culture. The schools involved were closely monitored, ensuring the training of the 11 Chinese teachers to teach this subject.

After analysing the evaluation, via external summative assessment tests, students confirmed the positive ratings they had achieved in the internal assessment.

National programme for the promotion of school success

At the end of the first year, the Mission Structure drafted a report presenting the results obtained in 2016-2017 and, among other topics, final conclusions. In addition to the statistics, the aim is to reflect upon the work done during the 2016-2017 academic year, considering the results that can already be identified. As part of the monitoring process, at the end of year 1, over half of the groups implemented between 80% and 100% of the measures foreseen in their strategic action plans, demonstrating schools’ major involvement in promoting educational attainment.

On the PNPSE platform, support and monitoring tools were made available to schools, such as:

1. A link for monitoring the 2016-2017 school results to allow data collection, for the calculation of retention rates by year, of the percentage of successful students, as well as of the quality of learning in Portuguese during the first two years of basic education, by collecting the good and very good classifications.
2. A forecast simulator for PNPSE retention and dropout rate as a self-regulation tool, based on data exported by schools to MISI (DGEEC).

To this end, each school can check retention rates for the 2014-2016 period, those for the 2016-2017 academic year and the respective projection for the current 2017-2018 academic year, taking into account the commitment to a 25% reduction in the 2016-18 period.

According to the data obtained by DGEEC regarding retention and dropout rates, there was a drop in 2016/17 when compared to the past records of schools covered by the PNPSE.

In the 2017/2018 academic year, the Mission Structure continues to monitor schools, promoting reflection and sharing of good practices.

Equally, added emphasis is given to developing local strategies to promote educational attainment, for example, by organising meetings targeting municipal educational services, the resources used in municipal applications and school and CFAE management, as well as the supervision and monitoring of measures of Municipal Integrated Plans built on coordination and complementarity with the schools’ strategic action plans.

Additional information available at: 12.3 Support Measures for Learners in Early Childhood and School Education.

Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education

The Student Profile, approved by Dispatch no. 6478/2017 (8), 26th July, sets out the results expected
of young people when they finish compulsory schooling. To this end, the commitment of all stakeholders involved is crucial, from the school and of all those working within it, families and guardians, policy makers and society in general. In this sense, national initiatives have been developed to promote the ownership of this document by all those who, in one way or another, are involved in the education of Portuguese young people and a reflection focussed on specific solutions involving the organisation of school and education geared towards achieving this Student Profile.

Among these, Student Profile Day stands out, which was held on 15th January, 2018 and revolved around two simultaneous, interconnected events, with the same focus, which allowed for different contributions:

- a national conference involving various individuals from different sectors of society, and
- local conferences in schools, involving all educational actors and organised around several parallel activities.

During this event, the Student Profile brochure was launched and disseminated, at the same time it was made available on the DGE website.

To support the participants, a web page of the event was set up, where, in addition to practical information, several documents were made available to support school activities, such as presentations to promote discussion among teachers and activity guides for students.

323 school clusters or non-clustered schools throughout the country and islands took part in the event. According to the answers to a questionnaire used after the event, most of the participating schools (53.7%) maintained school activities, which took place in parallel with Profile Day activities; 40.6% of teaching institutions partially stopped lessons to do Profile Day activities and 5.7% of schools decided to stop all teaching. In these local initiatives, it was mainly teachers and students involved, as well as teacher librarians, parents and guardians, operational assistants, local councillors, among others. It is also important to mention that most participating schools involved all students, which accounts for the great impact that this initiative had.

In 2018, the Student Profile was published and made physically available to all public and private schools.

Alongside this initiative, and as part of the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 project, a workshop was held on 13th December 2017, which was attended by around 25 schools of the OECD School Network. Each school was represented by 2 teachers and 2 students. Once again, the aim of this activity was to give students a voice, using a consultation process about how to implement the abovementioned Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education in each educational context. This initiative also involved teachers who, first in interaction with their peers and then, in cooperation with the students, were able to exchange points of view and co-construct reflection and improvement in the teaching and learning process.

Escola 360°

The E-360° system [9] is an electronic platform that aims to facilitate interaction among all those participating in students’ educational process (parents/guardians, teachers, school leaders, administrative staff and educational administration bodies), allowing for greater collaboration and faster and more effective information exchange among the various stakeholders, ensuring security, confidentiality and existence of information in real-time. Its creation was based on the awareness that there were several electronic platforms for different school procedures involving duplication of work and a lack of transparency and communication.
School participatory budget

In order to promote students’ democratic participation, engagement at school and financial literacy at lower (3rd cycle of basic education, 7th to 9th grade) and upper secondary (10th to 12th grade), the current government created in 2017 extra funding for schools (1 euro per student) to be applied through a democratic process in which students prepare proposals for using such funding for improvements at their schools. Such proposals require the support of a minimum number of classmates and validation from the school head teacher. Then it is discussed and voted on by all students. The winning proposal will be implemented by the school until the end of the year.

After the success of the first year, with more than 1,000 schools involved (around 93% of public schools with lower and upper secondary), over 4,000 proposals and 46% of students voting, the second edition of this programme [10] will being undertaken in 2018.

Class size reduction

An independent team of experts undertook research in 2016-2017 on the costs and benefits of the government’s goal of reducing class size in different scenarios, producing recommendations for the responsible and successful development of such measure. This study shows the pedagogical benefits, particularly in terms of reducing school failure in basic education and in vulnerable contexts. It recommended the reimplementation of class size limits, which were used between 2004 and 2013: 24 in the 1st cycle of basic education, 24 to 28 in the remaining cycles of basic education, calculating the costs of such measures taken gradually over the next few years. This measure was already implemented in the 2017-2018 academic year, in the Programme for Priority Intervention Educational Areas (around 15% of the public network), and its extension to remaining schools was approved in the State Budget for 2018.

Reinforcement of school social action

In order to promote the principles of inclusion and equal opportunities in the educational system, as well as the main goal of achieving 12 years of schooling for all, since 2015, the current government has implemented:

- a system to provide free textbooks for all students in the 1st cycle of basic education (1st to 4th grades);
- expansion of economic support for educational expenses of poor families (school meals, educational facilities, transport);
- boosting human resources for special needs, including psychologists and other specialised professionals;
- a study undertaken by a working group, in order to assess the current policy of full-time school in the 1st cycle of basic education, and to develop some scenarios for an expansion to the 2nd and 3rd cycles, as set out in the government programme.

Valuing the teaching career

In order to value the teaching careers and to promote high-quality teaching practices, since 2015, the current government has implemented:

- the replacement of salary cuts and de-freezing of career progression implemented from 2011 to 2016 (same as other civil servants);
- all teachers hired with annual contracts during the last three years given a permanent contract as civil servants (over 3,000 teachers);
• involvement of teachers, systematically through their associations and directly in some initiatives, in defining curriculum policies;
• reduction of class size and of students/teacher ratios.

Revision of public support of private schools

The Portuguese state support private schools in areas where they fulfil public functions, particularly when there are shortcomings in public network. In 2016, the current government began providing transparency and rationality in the provision of such support, setting clear criteria and analysing its compliance in each territory and in each school year, in order to improve rationality in the school network, efficiency of public spending and equal opportunities between private agents.

Working group for the study of professional regulations for teaching Portuguese sign language

Order no. 2286/2017, 16th March, created a working group that took the first steps towards identifying and defining the requirements (academic and professional) for the teaching of Portuguese sign language in Ministry of Education educational institutions.

This working group includes a representative of the Assistant Secretary of State for Education, who will coordinate the work, as well as representatives of the Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Higher Education, the Secretary of State for Education, the Secretary of State for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, of the General-Directorate of School Administration, the General-Directorate of Education and the General-Directorate of the School Establishments.

The working group listened to the representative associations of sign language teaching staff, the respective governing bodies of the Autonomous Regions and the Schools Council, as well as observing the collective negotiation procedures resulting from the General Labour Law in Public Functions. Following the recommendations of the Final Report produced by the working group, Portuguese sign language trainers are now recognized as being part of the teaching profession, through the creation of their respective recruitment group, formalised in Decree-Law no. 16/2018, 7th March (as amended by Decree-Law no. 176/2014, 12th December).

Inter-ministerial working group on inclusive education

Despite the measures that have been adopted, the Portuguese educational system still has low participation levels of students with special educational needs (NEE) in class activities. It is difficult to guarantee the attendance and completion of 12 years of compulsory schooling and to ensure that all students receive a final certificate describing the learning accomplished and the skills developed within national curriculum subjects or other specific curricular areas. The aim is for everyone to achieve the Student Profile, including via alternative learning paths that allow each learner to progress in the curriculum and reach educational success.

In June 2016, eight years since the publication of the legislation defining the specialised support to be provided in pre-school education and public, private and cooperative primary and secondary education, there were already possibilities for improvement regarding a more inclusive school.

A Working Group was set up (Dispatch no. 7617/2016, 8th June) to draft a report proposing amendments to Decree-Law no. 3/2008, 7th January (amended by Law no. 21/2008, 12th May) and respective regulatory framework for the implementation of measures to promote greater educational inclusion of all pupils.
The Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Inclusive Education heard a range of stakeholders, carried out a survey of problems and sought the best solutions from a didactic, pedagogical, health education and social inclusion perspective.

In July 2017, the working group presented a proposal for legislation on inclusive education. This proposal has undergone a public consultation process until 30th September 2017 and was subject to changes due to the contributions received. At this stage, the proposal awaits contributions stemming from consultations required as part of legal procedures.

2017

Pedagogic innovation pilot-project

The Pedagogic Innovation Pilot-Project (PIPP), launched during the 2016/17 academic year, arose from the need to promote learning quality and success for every student, thus avoiding the repetition of school years by consolidating schools’ autonomy to devise and adopt innovative organisational, curricular and didactic measures. The project will last three years, without the need for extra human or financial resources, and aims to gain greater in-depth knowledge regarding the factors that facilitate or hamper schools’ practical autonomy, as well as innovative practices that promote success, with a view to their use in other school situations.

Throughout 2017, six school clusters from different regions of the country participated in five meetings that reflected upon and shared practices regarding the promotion of pedagogic and organisational innovation, involving a number of experts in the field of education and representatives of schools with benchmark practices.

INCoDe.2030

The National Digital Competences Initiative e.2030, Portugal INCoDe.2030 is an inter-ministerial initiative which covers the governmental areas of administrative modernisation, science, technology and higher education, education, planning and infrastructures, labour and economy, and that aims to improve the basic ICT skills of the Portuguese population, preparing individuals for emerging digital-based employment opportunities (see additional information in Sub-Section 14.5).

National strategy for citizenship education

The National Citizenship Education Strategy (ENEC), which was launched in September 2017, was set up as part of priorities established by the XXI Constitutional Government for the area of education.

The Strategy is based on the proposal set out by the Working Group on Citizenship Education, which was established by joint decision (Dispatch No. 6173/2016, 10th May, 2016) of the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality and the Secretary of State for Education, with the aim of designing a strategy for citizenship education to be implemented in schools.

The National Citizenship Education Strategy (ENEC) is coordinated with the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education (validated by Dispatch no. 6478/2017 [8], 26th July), as well as with the Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy Project (Dispatch no. 5908/2017 [11], 5th July), which is being implemented as a pedagogical experiment in 235 public and private schools. Among its guiding principles, this pilot project includes the promotion of citizenship education and development throughout compulsory schooling.

To this end, the curricular component of Citizenship and Development is part of primary and
secondary education syllabus according to three complementary approaches:

- being cross-curricular in the 1st cycle of basic education;
- being a separate subject (organized by semester, year or other), in the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education;
- being cross-curricular and developed with the contribution of all subjects and training components in secondary education, as well as in education and training programmes for young people at basic level.

In terms of the curricular component of Citizenship and Development, the National Citizenship Education Strategy (ENEC) proposes that students learn via plural and responsible participation to build a sense of citizenship and a fairer and more inclusive society through the framework of democracy, respect for diversity and defence of human rights. Different areas of Citizenship Education are identified and will be developed in the Citizenship and Development curricular component, divided into 3 groups with different approaches regarding the compulsory schooling curriculum:

1. The first group, which is compulsory for all levels and cycles of schooling, includes: human rights; gender equality; interculturality; sustainable development; environmental education; health.
2. The second group, included in at least two cycles of basic education, includes: sexuality; media; institutions and democratic participation; financial literacy and consumer education; road safety.
3. The third group, which is optional in any year of schooling, includes: entrepreneurship; the world of work; risk; safety, defence and peace; animal welfare; voluntary work; others (depending on school’s citizenship education needs).

The approach to these interrelated areas should focus on their contribution to developing the principles, values and competencies set out in the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education (See section in this sub-chapter).

Considering that Citizenship Education is a school-wide objective, the National Citizenship Education Strategy (ENEC) proposes that the implementation of the Citizenship and Development curricular component follows a whole-school approach based on, among others, the following objectives:

- For it to be part of the curriculum, in teaching and non-teaching activities, in day-to-day school life and its connection with the community;
- For it to be based on educational practices that encourage inclusion;
- For it to be aligned with the specific needs and profiles of the students and the priorities of the educational community;
- For it to involve students in active methodologies and offer opportunities for developing personal and social skills.

Learning assessment for the Citizenship and Development curricular component is covered by the legal regulations in force for each level of schooling. The assessment criteria to be defined by the Class Council and school must consider what impact student participation has regarding the activities carried out at school and in the community. According to the defined norms, these activities are included in the school leaving certificate.

**Curricular flexibility and autonomy**

*Dispatch no. 5908/2017 [11], 5th July, which created the Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy*
Project and is currently being trialled, defines the principles and rules guiding the design, operationalisation and assessment of the basic and secondary education curriculum to attain the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education.

Dispatch no. 5908/2017, 5th July allows schools to voluntarily sign up to the pedagogical flexibility and autonomy project, whose target groups are the classes in initial years of the different cycles (1st, 5th, 7th years of schooling), in initial levels of education (10th year of schooling) and 1st year of VET courses organized in the training cycle. A total of 226 schools (168 public schools and 58 private schools) signed up.

The project is monitored at central and regional levels by teams that boast responsibilities allocated to the departments and bodies of the Ministry of Education, namely the Directorate-General for Education (DGE), which coordinates the Directorate-General for Schools (DGEstE), the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education, IP (ANQEP, IP) and the General Inspection of Education and Science (IGEC). In order to support and monitor the work carried out in schools, and in order to strengthen ties between them and the different teams, there are national and regional meetings, as well as networking, distance support and training.

The following structures have been created for this purpose: the National Coordination Team, assisted by a technical team and regional teams, as well as by an advisory council of experts in the field of education. This project allows schools to participate in curriculum development, giving them the autonomy for greater curriculum flexibility in order to achieve meaningful learning for all. This means that schools can manage up to 25% of the weekly teaching of core curriculum; create areas of curricular autonomy and create new subjects, while not undermining subject areas and subjects in core curricula.

Therefore, considering the areas identified in the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education, the school’s options regarding curricular autonomy and flexibility are concerned with:

- improving, enriching and consolidating essential learning;
- promoting the arts, science, sports, humanities, practical and experimental work and ICT, as well as the integration of regional and local aspects;
- the acquisition and development of research, assessment, reflection skills, mobilisation of critical and autonomous information to solve problems and boost students' self-esteem;
- communication and expression experiences in Portuguese in different forms (oral, written, visual and multi-form);
- active citizenship, social participation within contexts of sharing and collaboration and the discussion of current issues;
- the dynamics of project work, focusing on students’ role as authors, providing significant learning situations.

**Curriculum working group (essential learning)**

After the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education was defined and consensus reached, priority was given to continuing the work focused on the subjects, i.e., the subject knowledge that contributes to achieving the standards in the student’s profile. Therefore, the correlation established with the concept of “slimming down the curriculum” (again expressed in the OECD Project “Future of Education and Skills 2030” Project) was not irrelevant to highlight a curricular perspective that does not prioritise enumerative encyclopaedic accumulation of knowledge, but rather the “more in-depth understanding of the complexity of knowledge that is selected as essential.”

As such, what is called Essential Learning (EL) expresses a triad of elements (knowledge, skills and
attitudes) that, throughout the curricular progression, show:

- what is essential to know (content of structured, conceptually linked, relevant and meaningful subject knowledge);
- the cognitive processes activated to acquire this relevant and meaningful knowledge;
- the know-how associated with the knowledge acquired in a given subject not only in its specific area, but also in the horizontal/vertical links between the knowledge of various subjects.

To sum up, within a democratic context in which social equity should be a day-to-day goal, “the ELs correspond to what should/can be learned by EVERYONE (because they are socially necessary and required by society itself - the base of the curriculum’s social legitimation), albeit at different levels of attainment, which never ignore the student’s acquisition of each EL. It can never be reported that only some will achieve this, accepting the exclusion of others”[ii].

With many international studies establishing a correlation between education and citizenship, the student profile and the EL are key documents of the primary, lower and upper secondary education curriculum.

**First foreign language from the 3rd year - update**

Since the 2015-2016 academic year, English as a first foreign language has been compulsory from the 3rd year of primary schooling, with a minimum of 2 hours per week (3rd and 4th years).

For the purposes of harmonisation and consistency in teaching English, curriculum standards in this language were defined for the 1st cycle of basic education (years 1 to 4) and adjusted for the 2nd (years 5 to 6) and 3rd cycles of basic education (years 7 to 9), in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Council of Europe, 2001), proficiency levels have been set by grade/year of schooling (from years 3 to 12) and a new recruitment group of English teachers for the 1st cycle of basic education was set up (years 1-4), defining complementary training in pedagogy and didactics of English to children.

With the earlier introduction of foreign language I, students are taught English for at least 7 years, from year 3 until the end of basic education in the 9th year of schooling. When students choose to continue learning English in the 10th year, it is a compulsory part of their study plan.

**Follow-up group of the pilot project of offering Mandarin as a foreign language on secondary education curriculum**

As the pilot project for the provision of Mandarin as a Foreign Language in the secondary school curriculum from the 2015/2016 academic year needs to be improved and is being monitored and evaluated during its implementation, a steering group has been set up to follow, monitor and assess the pilot project for the provision of Mandarin teaching in Portuguese public secondary schools.

With the setting up of this steering group via Dispatch no. 10973/2016, 9th September [14], the Ministry of Education provides continuity to the pilot project for providing Mandarin as a Foreign Language in the secondary school curriculum, which started in the 2015/2016 academic year in 12 public secondary schools, with continuity classes in year 11 and of initiation in year 10 of the Scientific-Humanities courses, thus investing in the Portuguese population’s qualifications and investing in secondary education.

Proficiency in various languages is an asset when it comes to active and participatory citizenship, also contributing to cooperation between peoples and cultures. This group will visit participating schools
and provide feedback for gradual monitoring throughout the year and subsequent assessment of the possibility of extending such provision in the near future.

**Free and reused schoolbooks**

Article 61 of Decree-Law no. 25/2017, 3rd March, which establishes the necessary provisions for the implementation of the 2017 State Budget, approved by Law no. 42/2016, 28th December, establishes (Under the heading - Free textbooks) that, at the beginning of the 2017/2018 academic year, all students in the 1st cycle of basic education in regular public schools have access to free textbooks.

According to the abovementioned article, the member of the Government responsible for the area of education defines the procedures and conditions for the free availability, use, return and reuse of textbooks, as well as the conditions for adoption and certification of textbooks that promote reuse at all levels of education.

As such, the Ministry of Education has set several procedures in motion to help make the acquisition and free distribution of textbooks for all students in public schools enrolled in the 1st cycle (grades 1 to 4) a reality.

For the 2018/2019 academic year, there are plans to extend free textbooks to all students in the 2nd cycle of basic education, that is, students in years 5 and 6, as well as establishing regulations for the reuse of textbooks.

**National programme for the promotion of school success - update**

There were 14 regional seminars attended by directors, coordinators of strategic action plan measures and other teachers, involving about 2,800 participants. There was also a National Seminar with the title A vez e a voz das comunidades educativas (The time and voice of educational communities), which was attended by 945 people, including directors, teachers, mayors, various professional in the area, parents and students.

The Schools Association Training Centres are holding workshops and training courses according to the needs identified by each school.

Pursuing the goals of the National Programme for the Promotion of School Success [15], the Government announced that, to this end, in December 2016, regional competitions were set up as part of the Regional Operational Programmes. These have enabled local authorities and inter-municipal commissions to request funding for school success projects.

To encourage local authorities to get involved in this work, a meeting was held allowing local authorities, inter-municipal commissions and schools to present and disseminate the collaborative work they are doing in this area.

In-service teacher training is also a predictor of school success and seen as contributing to the strategic action plans presented by schools, which means it should satisfy quality and impact criteria. As such, the training will be provided via partnerships with higher education institutions, societies and experts, focussing on a workshop approach, with experimentation in the classroom. As a way of encouraging municipalities to get involved in this task a meeting was held to allow municipalities, CIMS and schools to present and publicize the cooperation work they are making in terms of the promotion of school success.

All the strategic plans conception process was and is still followed by the Mission Structure, both in
the implementation and continuous training phases. Therefore, considering that the 2nd school period is undergoing, the Mission Structure is developing a proximity follow-up with the teachers that in each school coordinate the implementation of each of the measures delineated in the strategic action plans.

There are also meetings in all schools to boost the learning promotion work, and in a broader initiative there have been theme seminars with the goal of allowing schools to share the work they are undertaking.

**Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education**

The [Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education](#) [8] was approved on 26th July, after debate and public discussion, with wide-ranging participation of schools, teachers, students, student associations, parents associations and parents, teaching associations and scientific societies, teachers’ unions, researchers and higher education institutions, public administration, the Schools Council, the National Education Council, as well as other stakeholders, providing a number of important contributions.

This document works as a framework for educational decision-makers and actors at the level of educational institutions and bodies responsible for educational policies and is a common model for all schools and educational provision in compulsory schooling, such as curriculum, planning, implementation and internal and external assessment of teaching and learning.

In February 2017, The Ministry of Education published the [study](#) [16] that defines the exit profile of students leaving compulsory education.

This document will act as a framework for compulsory schooling and aims to meet the following objectives:

1. defining the purposes of 12-year compulsory schooling, which had been without a framework until now;
2. providing a common exit profile for all students at the end of upper-secondary education, regardless of the educational path chosen (science-humanities, vocational or artistic), to ensure permeability among courses and the legitimate aspiration that everyone can continue their studies;
3. outlining the competences needed for active citizenship, for an effective response to what society expects of students and, most of all, making sure that students finish schooling feeling motivated and able to invest in their education and lifelong learning.

**Escola 360°**

On 17th March, the Ministry of Education launched the [Escola 360° system](#) [9] (E-360°).

This is an education information system that centralises student management processes, from pre-school to upper-secondary education, providing all administrative information related to students on the same platform: personal details; registration, renewals and transfers; school calendar; classes; attendance; assessment; certificates and diplomas.

E-360° aims to facilitate interaction among all those participating in students’ educational process (parents/guardians, teachers, school leaders, administrative staff and educational administration bodies), allowing for greater collaboration and faster and more effective information exchange among the various stakeholders, ensuring security, confidentiality and existence of information in real-time.
To access the system, stakeholders will have individual, personal and non-transferable authentications, which will give them access to a set of data according to their user profile. Depending on duties and responsibilities, permissions are defined centrally and can be customised by the head of the school cluster or non-grouped school, except in the case of parents/guardians, whose permissions do not change.

E-360° has been operating in 10 pilot schools, and is expected to be gradually rolled out to all public and private schools with an association contract by 2018.

**School autonomy contracts**

The 21st Constitutional Government’s programme has consolidated and extended the system of autonomy, administration and management of schools and school clusters as a core element of the efforts to decentralise the powers previously wielded by the Ministry of Education. To do so, the Government has boosted the legitimacy and responsibility of the Ministry of Education’s administration and management bodies, consolidating the pedagogical autonomy of schools and teachers.

Autonomy contracts, as defined by the system of autonomy, administration and management of public pre-school, basic and secondary education institutions, are the tool for the development and extension of that autonomy.

Dispatch No. 11976/2016, 7th October [17], sets up the School Autonomy Contracts Project Team to undertake the following tasks:

- to study school autonomy consolidation via 2nd generation autonomy contracts which boost schools’ and teachers’ pedagogical autonomy;
- to monitor the implementation of autonomy contracts at macro level, thus allowing their timely renewal;
- to study and propose effective and swift rules for assessing contracts, with possible proposal for the amendment of Ordinance no. 265/2012, 30th August.

During an initial phase, several higher education experts and school head teachers were consulted on this issue.

**Timetable credit system**

The timetable credit is a set of hours assigned to each school and aims to ensure the implementation of measures that encourage educational success, particularly in relation to the strategic action plan designed as part of the National School Success Programme, and the school’s pedagogical management. Priority is given to implementing didactic and pedagogical measures to promote success at different levels of education.

The importance of form tutors is highlighted, with an increase in the number of credit hours assigned to their duties, particularly liaison with the other class teachers, as well as with the students and their families.

The form tutor is also seen as a key player in the educational process of each student, where the class council is the best place for its implementation. Greater importance is placed on managing and guiding the class learning, as well as the promotion of sustained reflection on the effectiveness and suitability of methodologies, thus improving the quality of learning and students’ educational attainment.
To the same end, the pedagogical council is key to pedagogical coordination and supervision and educational guidance, functioning as a bastion of the school’s pedagogical mission, ensuring that all children and young people have access to learning that allows them to complete compulsory education properly equipped with the essential skills for participation in 21st-century society.

At this level, another key measure is tutorial support for students with a history of retention, which provides continuous monitoring to find the most suitable responses to their specific needs, thus facilitating their integration and socialization at school and a successful educational path.

With this framework, for the current 2016/2017 academic year, a new organizational dispatch was published - Legislative Order no. 4-A/2016, 16th June [18], which is a tool to consolidate school autonomy, making it possible to organize school differently and create solutions that focus on the students’ needs.

This legislation made the following changes:

- clarification that the main purpose of the dispatch is to guarantee the quality of students’ learning;
- simplification of the formula for calculating timetable credits;
- the calculation of the timetable credit is based on the principle that a larger number of classes means a larger number of students, a greater diversity of courses and, therefore, the need for more hours to work with these students (support);
- flexible management of timetable credit;
- consolidation of the head teacher’s role;
- specific credit given for tutorials to support and supervise pupils with two or more retentions throughout the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education (primary and lower-secondary);
- revaluation of the generalist teachers by providing students in the 1st cycle of basic education (primary education) with comprehensive teaching and learning;
- teaching languages in terms of writing and speaking skills through workshops, according to variety of organizational solutions found by schools;
- clarification of the aims and value of teaching assistance;
- allocation of the non-teaching component to ensure support for teachers with visual impairment.

**Working group for the study of professional regulations for teaching Portuguese sign language**

Inclusive education is a strategic goal for investing in people and has widespread implications in all areas of public policy. The 21st Constitutional Government assumes this commitment with the construction of democratic and quality schooling that guarantees everyone the right to education and a fair and real equality of opportunity in terms of access to the curriculum and school success. This means that the educational system possesses the mechanisms to respond to the social, cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of our society’s school community.

All children and young people’s education must, therefore, occur in an environment that provides maximum cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social development, associated with the recognition of Portuguese sign language as a cultural expression and tool for access to education.

In that sense, Order No. 2286/2017, 16th March [19], created a Working Group that took the first steps towards identifying and defining the requirements (academic and professional) for the teaching of Portuguese sign language in the Ministry of Education educational institutions.
This Working Group includes a representative of the Assistant Secretary of State for Education, who will coordinate the work, as well as representatives of the Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Higher Education, the Secretary of State for Education, the Secretary of State for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, of the General-Directorate of School Administration, the General-Directorate of Education and the General-Directorate of the School Establishments.

It will consult associations of sign language teaching professionals, as well as other relevant bodies, and present a final report that considers the legal regime for vocational qualifications for pre-school, basic and secondary education, as well as highlighting other situations worthy of specific regulation.

**First foreign language from the 3rd year**

From the 2016-2017 academic year onwards, the teaching of the first foreign language (English), became compulsory for at least 7 years, from the 3rd year of schooling until the end of basic education. When students choose to continue studying it in the 10th year, it becomes a compulsory part of the curriculum.

**Inter-ministerial working group on inclusive education**

The working group presented a proposal for an Inclusive Education Decree-Law. This document is currently under public discussion.

**2016**

**Free and reused schoolbooks**

The 21st Constitutional Government, in its programme, states its commitment to valuing people and focussing public policy on the principles of equity and equal opportunities for all Portuguese children and young people. The Government Programme also includes the development of “a textbook acquisition and return system that gradually ensures free textbooks (...)

As such, to stimulate initiatives that make the most of school resources, the Government proposes to make textbooks less expensive for families and encourage their re-use without jeopardizing the freedom of schools to adopt textbooks, according to the provisions of Law no. 47/2006, 28th August, which defines the textbook assessment and certification system for primary and secondary education.

Article 127 of Law no. 7-A/2016, 30th March, which approved the 2016 State Budget, foresees the free distribution of textbooks to all students in the first year of the 1st cycle of basic education, with the creation of a working group whose mission is to define a programme for the acquisition and reuse of textbooks, with a view to implementing such a measure in compulsory schooling within the term of the current legislature.

As such, the Ministry of Education has set in motion several procedures to help make the acquisition and free distribution of textbooks for all students enrolled in the 1st cycle a reality.

For the 2017/2018 academic year, there are plans to extend free textbooks to all students in the 1st cycle of basic education, that is, students in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years, as well as establishing regulations for the reuse of textbooks.

**InfoEscolas portal (development)**

In November, 2016, InfoESCOLAS was updated to provide more information about students and
The new indicators are expected to offer more rigorous and realistic information regarding school performance and their absolute and relative positions. This recent update includes (i) an indicator of direct success pathways in upper-secondary education, which previously existed only for the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education, providing access to results that combine internal and external assessment; and (ii) panels by subject in upper-secondary education and in the third cycle, which extend analysis to all subject areas covered by external assessment, counteracting the overvaluation of Portuguese and mathematics.

This update and improvement is intended to provide schools and the general public with more and, essentially, better information, thus facilitating the processes of analysis and improvement.

In addition to the abovementioned developments, it is worth noting that the information compiled on the InfoEscolas Portal is being extended to include other data important for defining school performance, such as participation in programmes and projects, creation of partnerships and data on the involvement of students, as well as the relationship with the community.

**National reforms program**

The government presented the National Reforms Program [20] stabilising the following objectives:

- combating school failure, guaranteeing 12 years of schooling;
- investing in pre-school education as key to combatting school failure: it is always worth starting well;
- combatting failure at its root: developing basic education that is integrated, global and common to all children;
- guaranteeing 12 years of compulsory education: Improving upper-secondary education and diversifying training provision;
- improving upper-secondary education and diversifying training provision;
- diversifying training provision and improving vocational and artistic education;
- mobilizing School Social Assistance to combat inequalities and school failure;
- ensuring schools focus on teaching and student learning, valuing their professionals;
- modernizing learning models and tools.

**National programme for the promotion of school success**

Considering that the expansion of Pre-school Education plays a decisive role in reducing school failure and improving the quality of students’ learning, the Government has defined the legal entitlement of Pre-school Education for all the children between 3 and 6 years old as a priority before the end of the legislature.

Investing in quality education from the very first years is a key factor in educational success. Viewing the role of Pre-school Education as the first stage of Basic Education, closely linked to the 1st cycle of Basic Education that has recently been extended to 12 years of compulsory schooling, is strategically important to promoting social justice and equality of opportunities, according to the XXI Constitutional Government’s programme.

Within the context of educational policy guidelines set out in the 21st Constitutional Government Programme, the Key Options of the 2016-2019 Plan and the Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 23/2016 of 24th March, the National Programme for the Promotion of School Success (PNPSE) was created.

Within this framework, the Promotion of School Success Mission Group was also created. This
structure is scientific and monitors primary and secondary schools, implementing, monitoring and assessing the programme.

The objective of the PNPSE is to promote school success by intervening at the first signs of difficulty using a proactive approach based on the principle that educational communities best understand their contexts, difficulties and capabilities, and, as such, better prepared to design plans for strategic action, designed at individual school there, with the aim of improving student learning.

While academic success is influenced by internal and external factors, the role schools is crucial, given that community collaboration and responsibility at local and regional level are essential to school success and commitment to education and improved learning.

Within this context, 663 schools presented their strategic action plan in order to foster different dynamics in terms of organizational and pedagogical aspects which may offer an educational response “for each student” to improve their learning and provide a better school for all.

The measures outlined by each school focus mainly on the early years of the cycle, particularly in 1st and 2nd years of the 1st cycle of Basic Education, and the assessment of the plans undertaken by the Mission Group regarding pedagogical importance and sustainability.

In addition to the above, the design of plans and their analysis were governed by criteria, such as the inclusion of measures involving changes in work dynamics in the classroom, the collaborative work of teachers, the maximisation of internal resources of each school and the core nature of pedagogical differentiation and innovation.

Aware of the need to increase the effectiveness of the measures to be implemented, in order for them to become internalized in how school clusters / non-grouped schools in the future, the Ministry of Education will consolidate teaching work in most school clusters / non-grouped schools.

The strategic action plans were approved by the General Boards of each school, which are their responsibility and constructed according to the dynamics envisaged in the design process, with any associated partnerships considered important.

As such, they involve different actors, including the entire educational community, the university and polytechnic network, civil society and local authorities.

Here, municipalities and inter-municipal communities (CIM) play the role of partners in the implementation of these plans in a convergence between their own initiatives in the area of education, and the plans drafted by schools, in order to improve the learning, and reduce levels of school failure and dropouts.

This involves interaction with schools and other local educational policy partners to assess the possibility of convergence, using a complementary approach regarding school plans and the local authorities’ educational projects to apply for POCH funding.

The Ministry of Education [21] has supported schools, providing initial teacher training, supporting plan design, which will take place during a second stage during the school year that is now beginning, with a view to their implementation. At the same time, schools may ask for support to implement educational measures to be developed in connection with the educational community.

An early stage of the training plan involved the training of 160 trainers and the following phase of support for schools to design the plans was organised by 91 Schools Association Training Centres (CFAE) for a total of 156 classes and 2,811 students (teachers).
Now, once the strategic action plans have been drawn up, each CFAE assesses training needs so they can be implemented for associated schools.

The entire strategic action plans design process was monitored by the Mission Group, something that will also occur at the implementation stage, as well as ongoing training.

These school projects are part of a wider challenge of reducing school failure at national level by 50%.

The new assessment model is designed to promote school success, providing schools with the necessary conditions to focus on effective learning.

To this end, the end of the 4th and 6th year exams was announced, as was the introduction of national tests (as diagnostic tools) in the middle of the different cycles (2nd, 5th and 8th years), which allows timely action to improve learning via detailed, descriptive information made available to schools through individual performance reports in tests.

The model that supports these tests foresees the diversification of assessed subjects, which, combating a narrow curriculum, will allow information to be collected on the whole curriculum of the three cycles of basic education over a five-year period.

The new learning assessment system in basic education and measures promoting school success are guided by three key focusses:

- **Focus 1** – The implementation of routines of information analysis and processing regarding learning as a starting point for the definition of assessment frameworks, ensuring equity, rigour and transparency, and the definition of performance profiles, as guidance for teaching and learning.
- **Focus 2** – The involvement and joint-responsibility of all stakeholders in the assessment process (teachers, students and parents), in order to construct quality educational pathways.
- **Focus 3** – Improving diagnostic and formative assessment, focussing on internal assessment, which is the responsibility of schools, students and teachers.

The approved model – which will be universal and compulsory from the 2016-2017 academic year onwards – makes it possible to assess student performance and evaluate the education system in relation to all curricular components, without disturbing the normal learning of students in basic education.

As the English test (PET) is not part of the Integrated Model of External Learning Assessment in Basic Education, it was suspended as it was not consistent with the model. It involves external assessment as an integral part of internal assessment, which does not respect the principles governing learning assessment in basic education.

In terms of valid certification of foreign languages, the matter is currently being studied by the Ministry of Education and will be subject to an overall, structural review that encompasses the different foreign languages offered in the curriculum (primary and secondary education).

Supervision and monitoring of the model's implementation, as a public policy, is undertaken by those entities and services directly involved, in order to improve where possible. The recent school survey (October 2016) on Individual Reports and School Reports on National Tests and Learning Assessment Routines aims to accurately survey and systematize practices of appropriation and the use of national test results, their relationship with internal assessment and strategic plans to promote school success. The data will make it possible to disseminate good practices and improve the model.
Creation of a curriculum work group

A Curriculum Working Group was set up to define the exit profile of young people of 18 years at the end of 12 years of compulsory education.

The Ministry of Education launched a questionnaire for all teachers from public and private schools to discover their opinion of curriculum documents and how they use them in their work with students.

The results of the collected answers were presented at a conference on 30th April, 2016 - Curriculum for the 21st Century: skills, knowledge and values in 12-year schooling.

The Ministry of Education's aim is to create a broad discussion regarding the school curriculum, within the context of the need to define exit curriculum frameworks for compulsory education, encouraging discussion with teachers regarding the decisions to be taken on major areas of curriculum development and implementation and the degree of autonomy and decision-making that teachers should have.

The current curriculum documents for basic and upper-secondary education have been approved and implemented since 1991. At the moment, for the same subjects, there are odd situations in which 1991 programmes are implanted in conjunction with 2014 curriculum standards, 2001 programmes in conjunction with 2014 curriculum standards and 2015 programmes and curriculum standards.

This anachronistic situation of current curriculum documents in conjunction with different curriculum development models worsened with the suppression of the Basic Education National Curriculum (2001) in 2012, as this created a vacuum regarding the definition of the exit profile of students at the end of basic education.

Before beginning discussion on basic and upper-secondary education curricula and, particularly, the subject knowledge that students must learn throughout compulsory education, it is important to have a broad consensus on the skills, values and knowledge that all citizens have when leaving compulsory education to allow them to continue learning throughout life and respond to the social and economic challenges of today's world, developing 21st-century skills.

Once the exit profile for compulsory education is defined and consensual, another phase of work begins where the focus returns to subjects and the definition of subject knowledge which each knowledge area should contribute so all students can achieve the compulsory education exit profile. Once this educational goal is ensured, widespread school autonomy becomes possible in relation to the flexible management of the curriculum.

Inter-ministerial working group on inclusive education

An Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Inclusive Education was set up to propose amendments to Decree-Law No. 3/2008, 7th January, amended by Law No. 21/2008, 12th May, and respective regulatory framework, including funding and support mechanisms for the implementation of measures to promote greater educational inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

This mission is part of a clear objective of making changes to the system that "provide greater educational inclusion of students with special educational needs", thus lending substance to the Government Programme’s commitment to creating a "2nd Generation Inclusive School".
Follow-up group of the pilot project of offering Mandarin as a foreign language on secondary education curriculum

As the pilot project for providing Mandarin as a Foreign Language on the secondary school curriculum (2015/2016 academic year) needs to be improved, as well as monitored and assessed during its implementation, a steering group was set up to supervise, monitor and assess such provision in Portuguese public upper-secondary schools.

With the creation of this Follow-up Group, through Order n.º 10973/2016, of 9th September [14], the Ministry of Education continues the pilot project of offering Mandarin as a foreign language on Secondary Education curriculum, started in the school year of 2015/2016 in 12 public secondary schools, with continuity classes on the 11th grade and of initiation on the 10th grade of the Scientific-Humanistic courses, making a clear bet on the qualification of the students and the valorisation of Secondary Education.

The domain of communication competences in several languages is an added value for an active and participated citizenship, also contributing for the cooperation between cultures. This group will visit the participating schools and will produce information in view of its gradual monitoring along the year and subsequent evaluation as to its expansion in a near future.

The prices of school books will not rise in the next school year

The prices of school books will not suffer any raise in the next school year. This is a result of a convention celebrated with the Portuguese Association of Publishers and Bookstores (APEL), after a negotiation with the Ministries of Education and Economy. This agreement will be in force from April 1st onward.

Counteracting the raise verified in the last four years, this agreement allows some relieve of the pressure of education expenses on the Portuguese families’ budget.

Also starting in the school year of 2016/1017, the Ministry of Education will ensure the free distribution of school books to all the students of the 1st year of the 1st cycle of Basic Education.

What if it was me? Packing a bag and leaving action

The Refugee Support Platform (Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados – PAR), together with the General-Directorate of Education (Direção-Geral da Educação – DGE), the High Commissariat for Migrations (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações – ACM, I.P.) and the National Youth Council (Conselho Nacional de Juventude – CNJ) are preparing the launch of “What if it was me? Packing a bag and leaving”, an action to raise awareness amongst children and youngsters as to the difficulties endured by refugees to escape war and find humanitarian protection.

This action will take place on the first hour of one day in all schools across the country. Students will be challenged to, in that day, take a backpack to school with the goods they would take with them if they were refugees (using images or, if possible, the goods themselves), and will be asked to share the reason of their choices.

Other measures

Inter-Ministerial Working Group to present a strategy proposal for Citizenship Education.
Maria do Céu Roldão et alii, Para a Construção de Aprendizagens Essenciais Baseadas no Perfil dos Alunos


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